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Christian Humility.

“THE heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Take heed that ye be not deceived,” was the exhortation of Christ. So great is the danger of hypocrisy and of deceiving ourselves that a large portion of the scriptures contain rules of trial concerning our own sincerity. These are numerous in the writings of the prophets, in the discourses of Christ narrated by the evangelists, and in the epistles written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There can be no doubt of divine grace to men who repent. Our danger arises from imagining we are the subjects of acceptance with God, while we do not possess the Christian temper. The grace of God through Christ and the sufficiency of his expiation, are abundant encouragement for all men to seek life; but, it is only from the exercise of a Christian disposition that we may hope

ourselves to be personally accepted. The promises of acceptance with God are made to faith, repentance, submission, humility, and several other evangelical graces. Although God be gracious, many are destitute of the evangelical virtues to which the promises of life are given. In self examination, our work is to enquire whether we possess the temper to which forgiveness is promised, and not whether God be gracious; the latter is true, while there may be no ground to think the former. Among the graces to which forgiveness is promised, we find Christian humility to be one. Humility is essential to a holy temper. The angels of heaven, although they never sinned, are humble in the presence of an infinite God. When the seraphim behold the Lord, sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple of heaven and earth, they cover their faces with their wings, crying, Holy, holy, holy

is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory. Much more doth it become men, who have transgressed the law of God to be humble in his presence, and bow before him with deep abasement. Humility is a low opinion of ourselves in comparison with God, and the immensity of his works ; together with a sense of the imperfection in all our duties. No man can be profitable to God as he that is wise may be profitable to himself. All nations before him are as nothing, they are counted less than nothing and vanity. A humble opinion of ourselves is so fit for creatures and so essentially connected with all other Christian graces, that a total want of this, is proof of a state both unholy and unforgiven.

As men are prone to be filled with pride, and forget their dependence, we ought frequently to meditate on the following reasons for a humble temper.

THE INFINITE MAJESTY OF GOD.

A comparison of his excellent glory with the finite nature of creatures is sufficient to render angels and men self abased in his sight. In many things, we both learn and feel the truth by comparison with some superior standard, and when the glory of God is hidden, the weak mind dwells on itself, its own works, interests and desires until they become most important, in its own view. Folly is mistaken for wisdom, ignorance for knowledge, weakness for strength, and a dangerous self-sufficiency grows up in the heart. Those, who have been once humbled,

on losing a view of the supreme majesty, backslide into a confidence in themselves and their own attainments, which would be impossible, if their eyes were stedfastly fixed on the greatness of the Lord. Just apprehensions of God's glorious majesty are the most effectual means to reclaim and reproduce humility of spirit. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." "Wo, is me," said the prophet, "for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts." It was from a clear view of the unsearchable riches and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Paul was astonished at the grace given to him, and described himself as being "less than the least of all saints." A comparison between God and his people discovers a difference, which, in their estimation, can neither be described nor justly apprehended. His greatness, by comparison, makes all created things appear small. In the light of his fulness and glory, both natural and moral, all finite attainments in understanding, wisdom and goodness vanish away ; so that, those who see this glory, feel themselves to be less than nothing and vanity. The notion of their own importance is lost in amazement, that one so great and independent, so glorious and holy, should preserve creatures, who, in themselves, are so near to nothing compared with him, and who by reason of their sin deserve to be eternally rejected.

If impious transgressors saw

the greatness of God who is offended, they would exceedingly fear and tremble ; or if Christians were more faithful to keep him in sight, their hearts would more often be humbled within them.

The immensity of God's works furnishes a reason for us to be humble before him.

The works of God are great and marvellous. He reigns in an immense kingdom, and his subjects are a countless multitude. He hath created, possesses and governs many worlds, and many hosts of intelligent beings, some of which, we know from his word, excel in glory far beyond what we are able to conceive. When we look on nature, which is the house of his forming ; on its variety, fulness and extension, we are constrained to say, " Great and marvellous are thy works, thou king of saints !" Through personal attachment, the sinful often lose a sense of the immensity of intelligent created beings, and the value of their rights and happiness. In pride of heart, they think the Lord under a sort of obligation, to make all things subservient to their own wishes. This is the fruit of a dishonest temper. Let the heart be made right ; let the spirit and benevolence of the gospel be reinstated in the soul, and the glory of God will be seen in the greatness and value of his works. Thus the mind is prepared to view itself in comparison with the vast intelligent kingdom of God ; with the numbers of his family, the sacredness of their rights and the value of their happiness. Being, in a measure, delivered from an over-value of themselves, they

see the worth of others, and become humble from the sight of their own comparative smallness in the midst of God's works.—

On these principles, humility becomes those, who are greatest and most useful among men, for what are they compared with the whole kingdom of God ! Or what are their interests when opposed to the whole ! On returning from a survey of the works of God, to contemplate ourselves and feel our own weakness, we may fitly say, What am I a child of dust, that thou art mindful of me, that thou upholdest me by the visitations of thy providence, and comfortest me by thy grace !

Their own sinfulness is another reason for humility in Christians.

" Not a just man on earth doeth good and sinneth not. "— It is not the purpose of infinite wisdom wholly to cleanse any from their sins on this side the grave and eternity. Many, who have received the promises in part, must wait for their completion, until the body sleeps in dust, and the soul is delivered from its polluted tabernacle.— There is such evidence of this fact, that those who deny it of themselves, will hardly obtain credit with their fellow men of being honest persons. None have a greater sense of their own sin, or of the number and constancy of their iniquities, than those who through the effectual calling of God are sanctified in part. Their experience in a Christian temper, even when its exercises are weak and inconstant, enables them to distinguish by their own feelings, whatever is of a contrary na-

ture. Their love of God, altho' imperfect in degree, makes them observant of what is contrary to his holiness, his express law and their own duty : They daily find fresh occasion to abase themselves before the Lord for dispositions, actions and desires, which they know to be sinful. Christians can confess their sins more explicitly than any other persons ; not because they are more sinful, but from a deep sense of the evil of sin, which is obtained through more clear views of divine holiness and a more circumspect watch of their own hearts. By much attention, they find the remainder of sin, to be a law in their hearts warring against the law of God.—After all their watch, attention and prayer, they come to the conclusion of the most eminent apostle when he bewailed his remaining sin, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !"

The imperfection of Christians in their best duties is another reason for humility.

The Psalmist said, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad,"—broad in the number of duties it commands, and the perfect heart with which they ought to be performed. The commandments of God enjoin on us to love him supremely, intensely, and at all times ; to love our neighbor as we do ourselves ; be just and honest in our whole conversation ; deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts ; worship and trust in the Lord, present our bodies a living sacrifice, and conduct in all respects as though we must give an account. What Christian or

what understanding man can be found, who will pretend that any live according to the extent and spirit of these commands, and of others similar to them ? If he compares his duties, his motives, or the intensity of his most pious affections, with the law of his Redeemer who enjoins them, he will see great reason to be humbled for the imperfection of every duty. His love of God is not commensurate to that glory which is seen in the divine character ; his love of his neighbor falls far short of the rule, and is mingled with much of a contrary nature ; his faith is weak, and submission incomplete ; and his duties of worship are alloyed with sin. When he hath resolved, he knows not how to fulfil ; and after his affections and hopes, desires and enjoyments, in some favored season have been delightfully spiritualized, ere he is aware, he is fallen down again to the darkness of time and is weak in contending with the sensuality of his own heart. In every thing, compared either with the holy law or the bright example of our Saviour, he finds himself deficient : Thus, in the spirit of humility, he can confess that by reason of the imperfection of his duties, he is less than the least of all his brethren, who have a right to be esteemed the saints of God.

The humility of Christians is increased by considering how little they do for the glory of God, and what inadequate returns of gratitude and praise they make to the Saviour of mankind for his love to perishing sinners. Our God from the excellency of his being, is worthy to receive

praise from every creature in earth and heaven. For this reason we are directed, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all for the glory of God. The greatest of all obligations on Christians is to glorify God." When they see his excellent majesty, and this obligation, which is on all creatures; also, consider how little they have done, in every part of their lives to advance his praise, they fall low in abasement, apprehending themselves to have been nearly useless in the great purposes for which their being was given. Or if they reflect on the Saviour's love in becoming a ransom for the sins of the world, his kindness to them in giving Christian knowledge, sanctifying their hearts, restraining from presumptuous sins, and permitting them to hope for acceptance through his merits; they feel all their returns of gratitude and obedience to have been inadequate to their duty.

As humility is the common duty of men, so it is a source of the most lasting peace. Whenever a creature, forgetting his dependence, exalts himself, he may be sure to meet with many causes of humiliation. Men will not fail to mortify his false conceits, and the righteous providence of God will teach him that self confidence is unfit for dependent creatures. While the proud in heart suffer the natural effects of their own vice, the humble Christian hath satisfaction in lying at the foot of divine sovereignty and committing himself to infinite grace. Let every reader examine, that he may know his own spirit. Whether

the greatness and glory of God, or his wonderful works, or our own sinfulness by nature, or the imperfection of our best duties; or whether the little we have done for his glory, and our inadequate returns for a Saviour's grace be considered, each of these are a sufficient reason for a very humble spirit.

I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

SIR,

I AM a Christian professor, and have hoped myself to be sincere; yet have often been charged with imprudence.— Sometimes, I have been convinced the charge was just; at others, I have not seen it to be so. I have studied much, without success, to find in what the grace of Christian prudence consists, and how we may always conduct discreetly? If you can give me an answer to these questions, it will much oblige one of your constant readers.

A. B. T.

Answer to the Letter of A. B. T.

SIR,

YOUR request to be informed in what the grace of Christian prudence consists, and how we may always conduct with discretion, cannot be answered explicitly; and if it were done in the most perfect manner that is possible, innumerable persons would not understand. What the world call imprudence often arises from an

imperfect intellect, for which, it is possible, the person may not be guilty; from a sinful heart, which, with its consequences, are always forbidden; and from an ignorance of human nature, which is the result either of a weak understanding, or inattention to the events of nature. providence, and the society in which we live.

This description of the causes of imprudence may assist us to see in what prudence consists. There are certain words in common use among Christian people, which have a general import or meaning: They do not mean any particular grace which can be characteristically distinguished from all others; but in a practice, which is the result of a sound understanding, and the uniform exercise of a Christian temper.

In this class of words we find holiness, wisdom, prudence, and several others of great practical significance.

Holiness is a conformity to God and his law, and implies all the moral virtues and Christian graces. Where we are certain of the exercise of one grace we may be certain of the principle from which all graces proceed. Holiness is the character in which man was created, but was lost by the apostacy; is restored by the renewing influences of the spirit, and is a fountain within the soul, inwrought and supported by the Spirit of God. from which all the holy exercises, employments and blessedness of heaven will flow. It is therefore a word of general signification.

Wisdom is another word much used by the sacred writers, and

of similar general import. As defined by some of our best lexicographers it is the power of judging rightly; to which, perhaps they ought to have added, "and the disposition," of judging rightly; for it is hard to conceive how any power whatever, without a disposition to use it, will lead any person to a wise conduct.

By the moral writers, wisdom has been defined, "that discretion, which enables men to perceive what is fit to be done according to the circumstances of time, place and action."

In the word of God, wisdom hath a more exalted signification, and is occasionally used to express true piety, the essence of moral virtue, the doctrines of the gospel, the character of our blessed Redeemer, and even the incommunicable perfections of Godhead.

Prudence has been defined, "wisdom applied to practice," and for a general definition, perhaps a better cannot be given.

The holy scriptures describe Christian prudence by a number of its effects. "A prudent man covereth shame," he is not a tale-bearer, and revealeth not secrets where no good can accrue either to the public or to individuals from publishing them.

"A prudent man dealeth with knowledge." He determineth not on suspicion or evil jealousy, but from a certain knowledge of the facts on which his judgment is founded.

"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, and he looketh well to his going."—He acts not, in any case, without consideration.—"He that regardeth reproof is pru-

dent." He hath such command of his own spirit, that he can bear patiently the voice of his reprovers, and even of those who revile him, that he may thereby understand and amend his faults. "A prudent man foreseeth evil, and hideth himself." He foreseeth at a distance, the consequences of his own and others' actions; he will not provoke iniquity, neither will he through a misjudged zeal do evil that good may come; neither will he put to hazard a greater interest that he may come into possession of one which is smaller.

These with many other valuable maxims, are found in the holy scriptures, descriptive of the effects of prudence.

On a subject of so general a nature, and as a means of coming to the point of enquiry it may not be improper to describe how the words *prudence* and *prudent* are used in the common language of mankind, and applied to particular persons, characters and things. In the sense of the world, persons of the following description are called prudent. Those, who by a careful government of their tongues escape the contentions which arise from tale-bearing: Those who carefully pay their debts, thereby escaping the destructive costs of the law: Those, who in proper season provide for such wants of their families, as it may be foreseen will happen: The avaricious are called prudent, when they are thrifty and retrench their expenditures within their income; and the ambitious, when they manage so cautiously as to have the good will of all parties. In the worldly use of the word, pru-

dence doth not certainly mean any thing more than dextrous management, under the influence of the most selfish and hypocritical principles.

But our enquirer calls us to a higher subject, "What is Christian prudence, and how may I always act discreetly? From the result of our past remarks it appears that prudence, even in the loose sense of the word, proposes some object that is valuable, either for this or another world. A man is never called prudent, who by crimes hastens himself to the place of execution; and as it proposes some end which the world calls valuable, so it endeavors to effect this by means, which are not shameful.

Christian prudence proposes to itself the most glorious ends of action, and endeavors to effect them in the most direct and satisfactory way: In these respects it is not distinguishable from wisdom. Christian prudence is the right modification of all our actions for the glory of God and the well being of mankind.

Christian prudence proposes to itself the highest ends, the most glorious objects, the declarative honor of the Almighty, the happiness of his creatures, and our own personal good in subordination to these greater ends.

A prudent temper is the result of all the Christian graces in exercise, with the right government of all our passions and appetites. If the sinful passions of Christians are predominant, if they act without knowledge, or if they have become cold in the service of their Lord,

imperfect intellect, for which, it is possible, the person may not be guilty; from a sinful heart, which, with its consequences, are always forbidden; and from an ignorance of human nature, which is the result either of a weak understanding, or inattention to the events of nature. providence, and the society in which we live.

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But our enquirer calls us to a higher subject, "What is Christian prudence, and how may I always act discreetly? From the result of our past remarks it appears that prudence, even in the loose sense of the word, proposes some object that is valuable, either for this or another world. A man is never called prudent, who by crimes hastens himself to the place of execution; and as it proposes some end which the world calls valuable, so it endeavors to effect this by means, which are not shameful.

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Christian prudence proposes to itself the highest ends, the most glorious objects, the declarative honor of the Almighty, the happiness of his creatures, and our own personal good in subordination to these greater ends.

A prudent temper is the result of all the Christian graces in exercise, with the right government of all our passions and appetites. If the sinful passions of Christians are predominant, if they act without knowledge, or if they have become cold in the service of their Lord,

they will be guilty of imprudence.

Further, It hath always been observed, that there is a natural difference in the characters of men : Some are more and others less intelligent ; some have a strange dexterity, of which others are wholly destitute in discerning the motives and ends of those with whom they have any connections and of foreseeing the consequences of human action, either in themselves or others ; some are deeply studious and contemplative, while others are transient and fickle in all their conceptions and purposes ; some are irascible, and others calm and sedate. — All these have been called natural differences of the human character, and from what they originate, whether natural structure of body or mind, from education, or from some minor circumstance in the conditions of men, it is not necessary for our present point to determine.

These natural variations have a great and sometimes an unmanageable influence in the formation of an imprudent character.

The sanctifying grace of God doth not wholly remove these natural varieties of character. Paul was the rational and abstruse ; Peter the passionate and sudden ; and John the melting and beloved as much afterwards, as they were before they heard of a Saviour's name.

Infinite power could form instruments to complete all the purposes of infinite wisdom and goodness. So it is at the present day. Religion consists in a moral state of heart, and we must not expect that all good

men will have the same natural dispositions, or that grace will remove their variety of character. All men have their besetting sins ; neither must we expect a peculiar liableness to these will be wholly overcome. Christians, when they endeavor to act conscientiously, will sometimes be imprudent in the view of their brethren. We do not, without more grace than is commonly given, see eye to eye.

But shall this distinction let down the door of conscience and destroy the power of truth ? By no means. Shall natural differences of character destroy moral obligation, or the ground on which it stands ? This cannot be admitted. Although it be difficult to determine, in every instance, what Christian prudence is, on account of a variety in attending circumstances ; yet it always implies the following things.

A principle of obedience to God, a love of his law, a desire to advance his glory and the good of our fellow men, a careful government of our own passions and appetites, with an endeavor to obtain information, on every matter of importance, before we either judge or act decisively.

Christian prudence therefore implies integrity of heart. It is not a grace exercised distinctly and by itself in judging and acting ; but a result of all the graces, acting in things which relate to the well being of the present and a future life, under the direction of a sound understanding, and regulated by a competent knowledge of human nature and the laws of duty. If the heart be wrong all must be wrong ; or if the heart be honest

and the understanding incompetent, or there be a great defect in a knowledge of human nature it must be expected that imprudent actions will ensue: Hence we see some well meaning persons plunging from one to another scene of imprudence: Here a door is opened for the exercise of Christian charity, and for obedience to our Saviour's direction. "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote, out of thy brother's eye." After all there are some instances, in which it is difficult to determine between prudence and imprudence.

The second question of the enquirer is, "And how shall I always act discreetly and wisely?" All men have reason, at some hours, to lament their imprudence either in words or actions. "There is not a just man on earth, who doeth good and sinneth not." Still, there are certain rules for a prudent conduct, which every Christian should duly consider.

Never judge in matters above your knowledge. Nothing is more pleasing to natural pride than to think ourselves capable of judging in all matters of doctrine, discipline and practice; whereas, many Christians, through ignorance or other causes, are incapable of judging correctly. An unsuitable opinion of this kind, joined with a zeal not according to knowledge, will lead to many rash judgments. It is not uncommon to find these among people who have little doctrinal knowledge, less experience, and still less acquaintance with men. "Judge not that ye be not judged," is a

maxim of high importance for the prudent direction of human life.

2dly, Never act under the influence of appetite and passion. Both appetites and passions are necessary for the perfection of our natures. So long as they are under the control of reason they are innocent; but having overleaped this bound, they lead to all manner of criminal and imprudent conduct. No man can act prudently in the phrenzy of passion, or is fit company for a rational creature, when the appetites, which are common to him with the brutes, govern his conduct. The hour of passion is always an hour of imprudence; it is the hour of a madman, in which he casteth about firebrands, arrows and death, and saith "am I not in sport?"

3dly, Remember that for every action and word, however idle they may be, we must give an account before God.

A sense of the judgment we all have to pass before the bar of God, is one of the best excitements to Christian practice. This being lost, the sinner will become notorious in vice, and the Christian lax in every duty of his profession. Those who do not habitually expect to answer before God, will neither treat the persons of men decently nor their reputations and interests justly. Therefore, to conduct with Christian prudence, we ought habitually to remember that all our words and actions will be brought into judgment.

4th. A sense of the omniscience and omnipresence of God is necessary for Christian prudence. We say necessary for prudence,

but there is no need of this limitation, for it is necessary for all Christian conduct. When a due apprehension of the presence and knowledge of God are lost, we become exposed to the full force of every temptation from abroad, and every passion from within our own breasts. If God were not all present the universe could neither be sustained or governed; and if some sense of the truth be not preserved in created minds, there can be no virtue, obedience, or Christian practice. If before speaking or acting, every person thought as Jacob did, "How dreadful in this place! this is none other but the house of God," the place of his presence, there would be far less imprudence than we now see in the world.

5th. Prudence of conduct always hath some relation to others. It is that virtuous practice directed in the law, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Prudence and imprudence, in the sense we are now considering the subject, have some relation to other men; at least they are considered as being judges to whom we are amenable. Therefore to act prudently it is necessary we should have true apprehensions of men's rights and that the happiness of our neighbor is as valuable as our own. So long as we undervalue the good of others, there is the highest temptation to treat them imprudently; and from smaller acts of imprudence the highest acts of injustice will proceed.

6th. Whoever would act prudently must call on the name of the Lord. The experience of all Christians is a witness for the

benefit of prayer. "The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: He will also hear their cry and save them." "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with thy judgment; not in anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." These words of inspiration teach us both the propriety and efficacy of prayer to God that he would direct our steps, and preserve us wherein we are unable to keep ourselves. Certainly it is a truth, that those who neglect prayer will not act with Christian prudence. They may be the children of the world, who are wise in their generation for present things, but are not wise to eternal life.

P.

Godliness and Contentment the only Means of perfect Happiness.

THE most perfect happiness consists in contentment or satisfaction with what we possess. To experience perfect contentment, the object of possession must be suited to the nature of a rational mind, and its quantity equal to the utmost capacity of enjoying. If happiness was confined to the ample endowments and dignities of this world, the greater part of men would be excluded from a share. The nature of the state in which we exist, together with the good of society, require, that great worldly possessions or dig-

nities should belong to a few. In the distribution of these, by his all-wise providence, God doth not act partially ; neither, has he left any part of mankind in a situation to despair of being happy, unless it be from an obstinate determination not to pursue the means of their own good. The true good, the greatest and eternal good is placed before every mind. Wisdom addresses all in the same language; fear God and keep his commandments, this is the whole duty, the whole happiness of man. Those things in which a sinful heart places the chief good of existing, are but appendages of a short life, not essential to happiness, not absolutely necessary for the blessedness of any mind, and no evidence that the possessors are favorites of heaven, or that they will be in any degree distinguished from their brethren in that state where we shall all soon exist. Neither are those things evidence of greater happiness here, for it is more often contrary. In how many instances do men say, yonder is a happy person ! His situation places him above the evils, which are my greatest affliction; when, if we could look within such a breast, we should see a heart of wretchedness, the whole soul a cage of evil and disquieting passions, discontent with God, enmity against men, dissatisfaction with itself and with providence, and none of that peace which passeth understanding. Could we see the hearts of men, it would give us an opinion of what the world can do for us very different from that we have by looking on their external show. If it were in

our power to look directly on the heart, as omniscience doth, the whole delusion would appear, and we should see vanity of vanities to be the motto engraven on all the things which are coveted. A rational mind cannot be contented and happy without a good which reason approves. Moral and intellectual enjoyments are the food of souls ; a food as necessary for their peace, as material food is for the animal body. The mind of man has no power fitted for independence ; no wisdom sufficient to make the best choice for himself ; no sufficiency within himself for being happy, even with all the aid the creatures can give him, if he hath not a God to be his friend and portion ; a God to preserve and direct his steps, guide him to his highest good, and satisfy him with his own glory.

The reader, who is fascinated with the world, may say, " these are the speculations of a dry moralist, or a sour misanthropist, for contentment may be obtained from an enjoyment of the creatures."

LET THIS BE THE POINT AT ISSUE.

Can a rational mind be happy by any possible enjoyment of the creatures, while unprepared to delight in the moral glory of God !

For evidence we will resort to experience, reason and the word of God. No greater scope of evidence can be desired, no other source can be found.

Experience is a source of evidence to which all may repair, and from this the honorable and ignoble, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, accor-

ding to the opportunity they have had in life, may derive instruction.

Experience will give its universal testimony, that the most full and varied enjoyment of the creatures never imparted contentment to a mind, which is unprepared to delight in the moral glory of God. Ask the votaries of the world, the avaricious, the sensual and ambitious, whether they have yet obtained a supreme good? They will not pretend they have; still, may say, we are in the direct road. Mistaken creatures! They think a few more thousands, an office in expectation, or some hours enjoyment of the most sordid appetites will complete their purpose. Thus they must go on in delusion, until the good Spirit of God, the awful checks of his providence, or the more awful hour of death opens their eyes to a wise opinion. Every one who beholds these persons, is convinced they are not yet contented; and if not contented, not happy. They thirst for the world as eagerly as ever, and even until dotage, if life permits so long, grasps its honors, pleasures and profits. Personal experience will teach the same which we have learned by an observation of mankind. Who is the reader, or where is the man that can say I am satisfied, unless his heart hath been corrected by the power of divine grace.

Doth not sound reason unite its testimony to that of experience? Certainly, reason teaches that a rational and immortal spirit cannot be satisfied with pleasures that are animal, or objects which are perishing. The mental powers of knowing and de-

siring, will speedily outreach the whole contents of a material world, and stretch into that immensity and eternity which is the dwelling of God. The minds of creatures were formed by God to be satisfied only in himself. He will forever remain the fountain of rest to the minds he hath made, and such as cannot find their rest in him must remain unhappy.

The same truth is taught in the holy scriptures. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Religion furnishes the only satisfying good; therefore, it gives the only perfect happiness. "Delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart;" and he being the portion, the mind cannot fail of being satisfied. An argument which the apostle uses, to prove that godliness is the true riches which gives contentment, is this: As we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out. Things, which must be so soon and wholly left, cannot have the value men are apt to place upon them, and will not bear a comparison with the riches of godliness. These being inwrought in the soul, become part of its nature in such a sense, that death cannot make a separation.

But what is that godliness, which gives contentment?

The holy scriptures speak of the form of godliness without the power. This a man may have and still be a discontented creature. The form of godliness is the external profession and appearance of religion, while destitute of any corresponding affections of the heart. This cannot give contentment.

Godliness is a resemblance of supreme holiness in the will and all the moral powers and affections of the mind. A moral conformity to the rectitude of God is the essential nature of true religion. Men are full of enquiry what religion is; they describe and dispute much, and in the multitude of corrupted opinions, many things are set up as true religion, and many ways are described for obtaining it, which have no foundation in truth. The descriptions of religion or godliness are uniform through the whole sacred oracles. It was the same in the days of the patriarchs, of the prophets and of the Son of God. It is, though not in degree, still in its nature, the same in earth and heaven; in time and eternity. God created man in his own image, which extended to his moral temper, and was the pure religion of paradise. He lost that image, became destitute of a moral conformity to God, and from that time became a discontented creature. This image or conformity to God is restored by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, as the only preparation for dwelling in his presence and enjoying his glory. True religion or godliness is therefore called being made "partakers of a divine nature," partaking of holiness, in our measure, as God hath it in immeasurable degree. A communication of "grace for grace"—a communication of graces to the heart that resemble and are of the same kind as those found in the divine Mediator. We are commanded to be holy, as God is holy, and perfect after

the manner that our Father in heaven is perfect.

A love of God is included in godliness, and will be found in every soul which is formed to resemble him. Where the heart is made holy, honest, just and benevolent, it will immediately discover the infinite glory of the Lord's perfections, the excellency of his law, and the fitness of his providence which is his moral perfection displayed in the government of creatures. It is a high display of the infinite Creator's glory, to behold a universe filled with creatures who bear his image. Though each one hath a separate existence, yet as it depends on his supreme will, it is a beam of his glory. When the heart is prepared to delight in God, it can find satisfaction in contemplating all his works of nature and of grace.

Can we not hence see how godliness produces contentment and happiness! If the mind can delight in God himself, in all the glories of his nature, in all his will, in all his works, it must be contented, for there can be no greater object of satisfaction. This comprehends the whole which eye hath seen, ear heard, or imagination conceived. When our desire is for things which cannot be had, or those which being received cannot satisfy, we must be discontented, which will ever be the case while our affections are ultimately fixed on any of the creatures. Were all the creatures placed in our possession, they could not fill that room in the heart, which the Creator designed for a love of his own infinite glory. The affections being

sanctified are turned immediately on divine beauty. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee," are the aspirations of the heart, while it adores the being and loves the providence by which all things are directed. A love of the creatures becomes sanctified, reasonable and proportioned to their real excellency, so that nothing is expected from them beyond what they can give. The creatures are enjoyed in connection with the Creator, as fruits of his fulness, and the love which begins on them ascends through this medium to the ocean of glory. This is godliness, which through contentment makes all things the riches of the soul, leaving no place for unsatisfied desires. It is a happiness peculiar to those who love the Lord. How rich are the godly! the description of the apostle is literally true, for "all things are theirs." Religion, instead of diminishing that good the creatures can give us, fits the mind to receive their whole value, to enjoy created excellence as it is in itself, and as it is related to infinite wisdom and glory. How unfriendly to man is that pride by which he is prompted to be independent of his Maker! How much he impoverishes himself by serving the creatures more than the Creator! How much he loses, when the image and love of God departed from his soul!

Let us reflect how great the divine love! Though our minds are weak, our natures frail, our powers in their most perfect state but vanity; we still have the capacity of receiving so immense a good, God himself with

all his wisdom, love and works. In acting our finite minds are weak, in receiving capacious; while our own perfection is less than nothing and vanity we may behold and enjoy all perfection. The glory of Godhead can be long but to one, the enjoyment of this glory to many. In this contemplation may every reader be filled with a love of God.

Y—T.

The Presbyterian Church of the United States, appropriately so called, is spread through all the parts West of New-England, from the North part of the state of New-York to Georgia and the Western waters. Thro' these limits they are intermixed with churches denominated by other names, Episcopalians, Dutch or reformed, Congregational, Baptist and Methodist. As the Presbyterian Church is in such intimate union with the Churches in Connecticut and Vermont, that each of them is represented in the principal judicatories of the other; it is thought proper in several numbers of this Magazine, to publish their Constitution of Church Government.—Information of the different usages in the several parts of the true Church of Christ, removes ungrounded prejudices and strengthens the bonds of their Charity.

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THE FORM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Chap. I.—Of the Church.

SECT. I. **J**ESUS CHRIST, who is now exalted, far above all principality, and power, hath erected, in this world, a kingdom, which is his church.

SECT. II. The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ, and of submission to his laws.

SECT. III. As this immense multitude cannot meet together, in one place, to hold communion, or to worship God, it is reasonable, and warranted by scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches.

SECT. IV. A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the holy scriptures; and submitting to a certain form of government.

Chap. II.—Of the Officers of the Church.

OUR blessed Lord, at first, collected his church, out of different nations, and formed it into one body, by the mission of men endued with miraculous gifts, which have, long since, ceased.

The ordinary and perpetual officers, in the church, are, *Bishops or Pastors*; the representatives of the people, usually stiled *Ruling Elders*, and *Deacons*.

Chap. III.—Of Bishops or Pastors.

THE pastoral office is the first, in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. *The person who fills this office*, hath in scripture, obtained different names expres-

sive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

Chap. IV.—Of ruling Elders.

RULING elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them, for the purpose of exercising government and discipline, in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office has been understood, by a great part of the protestant reformed churches, to be designated, in the holy scriptures, by the title of governments: and of those who rule well; but do not labor in the word and doctrine.

Chap. V.—Of Deacons.

THE scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of their temporal affairs in the church.

Chap. VI.—Of Ordinances in a particular Church.

THE ordinances, established by Christ the head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted with its proper officers, are, prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the word of God; administering baptism and the Lord's supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving, catechising, making collections for the poor, and other pious purposes; exercising discipline; and blessing the people.

Chap. VII. Of Church Government and the several Kinds of Judicatories.

SECT. I. IT is absolutely necessary that the government of the church, be exercised under some certain and definite form: And we hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies. In full consistency with this belief, we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians who differ from us, in opinion or in practice, on these subjects.

SECT. II. These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties: Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative. They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ; and of excluding the disobedient and disorderly, from the privileges of the church—To give efficiency, however, to this necessary and scriptural authority, they possess the powers requisite for obtaining evidence

and inflicting censure: They can call before them any offender against the order and government of the church: They can require members, of their own society, to appear and give testimony on the cause; but the highest punishment to which their authority extends, is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent, from the congregation of believers.

Chap. VIII.—Of the Congregational Assembly, or Judicatory, usually styled The Church Session.

SECT. I. THE church session consists of the minister, or ministers, and elders of a particular congregation.

SECT. II. The church session is competent to the spiritual government of the congregation: For which purpose, they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of that church; to call before them the offenders and witnesses, being members of their own society, and to introduce witnesses from other societies or denominations, where it may be necessary, to bring the process to issue; and, when they can be procured to attend, to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend, or exclude from the sacraments, those who are found to deserve the censures of the church; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.

SECT. III. The minister hath a right to convene the session when he may judge it requisite. And he ought, in all cases, to convene them, when requested by any two or more of the elders.

SECT. IV. We think it proper, that every church session, keep a fair register, of births, of baptisms, of marriages, of persons admitted to the Lord's table, of deaths in the society, and of other removals.

Chap. IX.—Of the Presbyterial Assembly.

SECT. I. THE church being divided into many separate congregations, these need mutual counsel and assistance, in order to preserve soundness of doctrine, and regularity of discipline ; and to enter into common measures, for the promoting of knowledge and religion, and for the preventing of the encroachments of infidelity and error. Hence arise the importance and usefulness of presbyterial and synodical assemblies.

SECT. II. A presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.

SECT. III. Every congregation, which has a settled pastor, has a right to be represented in presbytery, by one elder ; and every collegiate church, by two or more elders, in proportion to its ministers. Where there are two or more congregations united, under one pastor, all such congregations shall have but one elder to represent them. Every congregation, which has no settled minister, and is able and willing, to support one, shall be entitled to be represented, by a ruling elder, in this judicatory. And where there are two or more such congregations, united for the maintainance of the gospel, and in their united state, are

of the description aforesaid, then such united congregations may be represented by one elder.—Every elder not known to the presbytery, shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment, from the church which he represents.

SECT. IV. Any three ministers, and as many elders as may be present belonging to the presbytery, being met, at the time and place appointed, shall be a judicatory, competent to the dispatch of business ; notwithstanding the absence of the other members.

SECT. V. The presbytery have cognizance of all things, that regard the welfare of the particular churches within their bounds, which are not cognizable by the session. They have also a power of receiving and issuing appeals from the sessions, and references, brought before them in an orderly manner ; of examining and licensing candidates for the gospel ministry ; of ordaining, settling, removing, or judging ministers ; of examining, and approving or censuring the records of the sessions ; of resolving questions of doctrine or discipline, seriously and reasonably proposed ; of condemning erroneous opinions, that injure the purity or peace of the church ; of visiting particular churches, to enquire into their state and redress the evils that may have arisen within them ; of uniting, or dividing congregations, at the request of the people ; and of ordering whatever pertains to the spiritual concerns of the churches under their care. And it shall be the duty of the presbyteries to report, to the synod,

licensures, ordinations, the dismissing or receiving of members, and the removal of members by death.

SECT. VI. The presbytery shall meet on their own adjournment : and, when any emergency shall require a meeting, sooner than the time to which the judicatory stands adjourned, the moderator shall, with the concurrence or at the request of two ministers and two elders, the elders being of different congregations, call a meeting of the presbytery, by a circular letter sent to every minister, and to the session of every vacant congregation having a right to send a representative to the judicatory, in due time previous to the meeting ; which time shall be ascertained and recorded by each presbytery, and shall not be less than ten days : and nothing shall be transacted, at such special meeting, besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been thus convened.

SECT. VII. At each meeting of presbytery, a sermon shall be delivered, if convenient ; and every particular session shall be opened and concluded with prayer : The roll shall be called, and the meeting recorded by the clerk, who shall enter the names of the members present, and also of those ministers who are absent.

Chap. X.—Of the Synodical Assembly.

SECT. I. AS a presbytery is the convention of the bishops and elders, within a certain district ; so a synod is the convention of several presbyteries, within a larger district.

SECT. II. The synod have power to admit and judge of appeals, regularly brought up from the presbyteries ; to give their judgment on all references, and ecclesiastical cases, made to them ; to review the presbytery books ; to redress whatever hath been done by presbyteries contrary to order ; to take effectual care that presbyteries observe the constitutions of the church ; to make such regulations, for the benefit of their whole body, and of the presbyteries and churches under their care, as shall be agreeable to the word of God, and not contradictory to the decisions of the general assembly, and to propose, to the general assembly, for their adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole church.

Chap. XI.—Of the General Assembly.

SECT. I. THE general assembly is the highest judicatory of the presbyterian church ; and shall represent, in one body, all the particular churches of this denomination ; and shall bear the style and title of *The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.*

SECT. II. The general assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery, in the following proportion, viz. Each presbytery, consisting of not more than six ministers shall send one minister and one elder ; each presbytery, consisting of more than six ministers and not more than twelve, shall send two ministers and two elders ; and in like proportion, for every six ministers, in any presbytery :

And these delegates, so appointed, shall bear the title of *Commissioners to the General Assembly*.

SECT. III. Any fourteen, or more, of these commissioners, one half of whom shall be ministers, being met, on the day and at the place appointed, shall be competent to form a general assembly, and to proceed to business.

SECT. IV. The assembly shall receive and issue all appeals and references, which may be regularly brought before them from the inferior judicatories; they shall review the minutes and proceedings of every synod, to approve or censure them: they shall give their advice and instructions, in all other cases submitted to them; and they shall also constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence, among all our churches.

SECT. V. To the assembly also belongs the power of consulting, reasoning, and judging, in controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproof, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery, or synod; of corresponding with foreign churches; of putting a stop to schismatical contentions, and disputations; and, in general, of recommending and attempting reformation of manners; and of promoting charity, truth and holiness, through all the churches; and of erecting new synods, when they judge it necessary.

SECT. VI. Before any overtures or regulations, proposed by the assembly to be estab-

lished as standing rules, shall be obligatory on the churches, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the presbyteries, and to receive the returns of, at least, a majority of the presbyteries, in writing, approving thereof.

(To be Continued.)

Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, held at Philadelphia, May 18th, 1809.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, met, agreeably to appointment, in the First Presbyterian Church, in the City of Philadelphia, at 11 o'clock A. M. and was opened by the Rev. Dr. Philip Milledoler, the Moderator of the last Assembly, with a sermon, from Matthew xxiv. 45—47 inclusive, "*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*"

The committee appointed to digest and form the information received on the state of religion, into a connected narrative, brought in their report; which, being amended, was adopted, and is as follows:

The General Assembly once more approach the churches under their care, that they may lay before them a condensed narrative of the state of religion within their bounds.

The dealings of God with us,

brethren, during the past year, call for renewed emotions of wonder, love, and praise. He has not left himself without a witness amongst us; the east, the west, the north, and the south can testify; for in them all his stately footsteps may be seen. In answer to the prayers of his people, he has come down like dew upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth; and we are happy to state that his glory is yet passing before us, and that his power and grace are still displayed, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, as well as in building up his people in their most holy faith. These are the great outlines of our situation; to the more particular description of which we now call your attention.

It is with peculiar pleasure, then, that we state, that peace and harmony, so ornamental and necessary to the Christian church, have prevailed in the past year, with but few exceptions, throughout our bounds; that the worship of God has been generally and respectfully attended in our churches; that the distinguishing doctrines of grace have been well received, and, in many instances, have been attended with great and visible success. Although from the great extent of late revivals and the numbers received into our church, there was reason to fear that many tares were interspersed with the harvest, yet we are happy to state that instances of apostacy have seldom occurred.

The leading features that have characterized our churches during the last year, have, we

apprehend, been a growing thirst for divine knowledge, and an increased attachment to the distinguishing doctrines of grace. Family visitation and the catechetical instruction of our beloved youth, have doubtless contributed in a great degree to excite, as well as to satisfy, this desire. We are happy to state that catechetical instruction has been attended to during the last year, with perhaps greater assiduity, than has ever been witnessed amongst us; and we are persuaded that its results will be highly favorable to the dearest interests of the church of God in our country. Deeply impressed with a conviction that holiness becometh his house forever, the churches of Christ have turned their attention, with increasing care, to the support of a wise and salutary discipline. Societies for diffusing evangelical truth have been organized, and are now in operation; Bibles and small religious tracts have been extensively distributed. Praying societies, formerly established, have been maintained, whilst many new ones have been added. These institutions, by calling into exercise the latent gifts and graces of the people of God, in an essential part of his worship, as well as in promoting zeal and brotherly love, have served as nurseries of the church, and have produced, and are producing, almost incredible effects upon the moral and religious state of the community.

The presbytery of Long Island has experienced a very general revival from the presence of the Lord. The Presbyteries of Albany and Hudson,

in some of their congregations, have been visited with divine influence from on high ; whilst a large district of East-Jersey, as well as its extreme in the west, has known, or is learning, to know, the almighty power of God. Acknowledged infidels, and practical unbelievers, who so lately eyed the cross with malignity, and its adherents with contempt, are now seen, in considerable numbers, cloathed, and in their right minds, at the feet of Jesus ; whilst the poor, dissipated prodigal, who so lately was a burthen to himself and to the world, is seen returning to his father's house, or already encircled in his father's arms. Those parts of the church which were favored, with revivals in former years, appear to be securing the advantages they have gained, and to be gathering in the gleanings of the vintage ; whilst bodily agitations, where they had appeared, have almost wholly subsided, and have given place to calm inquiry into the great and leading doctrines of the gospel.

The Assembly have observed with pleasure that the various missions under their direction, have been prosecuted with exemplary diligence and fidelity, and with a measure of success calculated to rejoice the hearts of those who have contributed of their worldly substance to the support of this great object, and to engage them to a continuance of their liberality. Through the instrumentality of these missions, not only a large population of our own citizens who would otherwise remain almost wholly destitute of the gospel, have its doctrines and

ordinances dispensed to them ; but several Indian tribes have the invaluable blessings of civilization and the Christian religion brought within their reach ; and the unhappy children of Africa are also greeted with those glad tidings of salvation to which, in a Christian country, they have a peculiar claim.

But whilst events of a prosperous nature are recounted with pleasure, it is the duty of this Assembly, to inform the churches, that circumstances have occurred of an opposite description, and such as ought to be considered as highly calamitous and distressing. They have learned with regret, that, whilst several parts of our country have recently been supplied with a gospel ministry, and the regular administration of ordinances, others in these respects are in an exceedingly destitute situation. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few ;" pray ye, brethren, the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. In a portion of country of some extent, embraced within the bounds of the synod of Kentucky, we are sorry to learn that a spirit of fanaticism propagating the most palpable errors, as well as insubordination to the constituted authorities of our church, has greatly prevailed. In consequence of this, some of our congregations have been torn by intestine divisions, and are yet bleeding at every pore. The Assembly conceive that they cannot do justice to their own feelings on this occasion, or to the cause of Christ, without noticing in terms of high disap-

probation so ruinous a departure from duty ; they hold out at the same time the hand of conciliation to their erring brethren, and invite a speedy return to the good order and discipline of our church.

In addition to the above, the Assembly have heard with pain of the prevalence, in some parts of their bounds, of a form of religion without its power, as well as of vice and immorality.— Lukewarmness detested by the head of the church, intemperance ingulphing every social and domestic virtue, an awful profanation of the sabbath, sports and unlawful games, like so many ensigns of death, have appeared, assailing the kingdom of Christ, and strengthening the empire of his foes. Whilst we are undoubtedly called to mourn over these evils, we are equally called to counteract them ; “ the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, and shall finally prevail.” “ For Zion’s sake, therefore, will we not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake we will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”

From the accounts received from our sister churches of Connecticut and Vermont, it appears that the great head of the church has manifested toward them, during the last year, the most signal interpositions of divine love and mercy. Yale College has been visited, and a number of her sons have been hopefully gathered into the bosom of the church. Many towns and villages, in both of these States, have felt, in a very uncommon

degree, the power of sovereign grace ; and accessions to their communion have been exceedingly numerous. Infidelity is confounded, or retires from the public eye. Characters distinguished by talents, learning, morals, and property, have been led publicly to profess themselves the disciples of our Lord. A knowledge of the holy scriptures is diffusing itself far and wide. We are also informed, that distinguished revivals of religion have existed in several parts of Massachusetts, and that hopeful appearances have also begun in New Hampshire and in the District of Maine.

On a review of the whole information we have received, the Assembly take their stand at the foot of the cross, and rejoice in the wonders of redeeming love.

If the state of religion in the churches under their care, had even been generally dark and unpromising, though they might mourn over the ingratitude of man, they could not cease to confide in the faithfulness of God. But in justly deserved wrath, our God has remembered mercy ; once more he has given us abundant cause to glorify his name, and to rejoice with trembling.

We have only to add our ardent prayer, that *the angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to every kindred and tongue*, may soon reach the utmost bounds of his destination ; that every obstacle that might impede his flight, or stay his progress may be speedily removed, and that the knowledge of Christ may soon cover the earth, as the waters fill the sea. Come

quickly ; "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The committee to which was referred the report on the appointment of a day of thanksgiving, brought in the following report, which was adopted.

Whereas it has pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to avert, in a great measure, the temporal judgments which threatened us during the last year ; and whereas the interests of religion are advancing, so as to fill the hearts of believers with gladness, and to encourage them in hopes of more copious outpourings of God's spirit :

Therefore, resolved, that it be, and it hereby is, recommended to the several congregations under the care of the General Assembly, that they do respectively set apart the fourth Thursday in August next, as a day of solemn thanksgiving and prayer ; and that, on said day, the members of our different congregations throughout the United States, do abstain from unnecessary worldly labor and recreations, and meet in their several places of public worship, for the purpose of rendering their united praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the distinguished and unmerited blessings with which he has visited our country, and the churches in our land, during the year past :

And that it be further recommended to the congregations so assembled, humbly to implore the great Head of the church, that he would establish the peace and prosperity of our country, visit his churches with still more copious effusions of his blessed

Spirit, throughout this and every other land ; that sinners may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; that professors of religion may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called ; that the heathen may be given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession ; and that the ends thereof may speedily see the salvation of God.

The Committee to which the pastoral letter had been committed, submitted to the Assembly the following resolution, which, being read, was adopted.

Whereas the book of discipline states that children, born within the pale of the visible church and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church, and specifies various important particulars, in which that inspection and government should be exercised, as also directs the mode, in which they shall be treated, if they do not perform the duties of church members ; and whereas there is reason to apprehend, that many of our congregations neglect to catechise the children that have been admitted to the sealing ordinance of baptism, and do not exercise suitable discipline over them : Therefore,

Resolved, That the different Presbyteries within our bounds are hereby directed to enquire of the different sessions, whether a proper pastoral care be exercised over baptized children in their congregations, that they learn the principles of religion, and walk in newness of life be-

fore God ; and that said Presbyteries do direct all sessions that are delinquent in this respect, to attend to it carefully and without delay.

The committee appointed to report on the establishment of a society for procuring and distributing religious tracts, reported the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That, whereas it appears to this Assembly, that great and increasing good hath accrued to the church of Christ, by the distribution of small, cheap, religious tracts ; it is hereby earnestly recommended, that each synod take measures for establishing as many religious tract-societies within their bounds, by the associating of one or more presbyteries, as may be most convenient for this purpose ; and that such societies may adopt such plan, for carry-

ing into effect the object of this resolution, as may be most conducive, in their judgment, to this end.

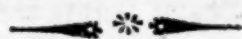
The Rev. Messrs. Samuel Blatchford, D. D. David Higgins, Aaron Woolworth, Samuel Miller, D. D. Joseph Clark, Ashbel Green, D. D. Robert Cathcart, John McMillan, D. D. Thomas E. Hughes, Drury Lacey, Moses Hoge, Robert G. Wilson, James Blythe, William Turner, and James Hall, D. D. were appointed a standing committee, to certify the good qualifications of the preachers travelling to officiate in the bounds of the General Association of the State of Connecticut ; and it was, moreover, agreed, that any preacher travelling as aforesaid, shall have at least the name of one of the committee who shall belong to the synod from whose bounds he came.

Agreeably to an order of the General Assembly, the following view is given of the state of the churches under their care ; in which is shown the names of ministers, congregations, licentiates, and, as far as was practicable, the sums collected, during the last year, for the missionary and commissioners' funds, by the presbyteries, and by the congregations. It will be observed, that from some presbyteries no reports have been this year received ; and no proper documents being at hand, the names of the ministers and congregations belonging to these presbyteries are omitted.

The General Assembly have under their jurisdiction, 7 synods, 32 presbyteries, and 1 association ; viz.

		Presbyteries 4.	Min.	Con.
I. Synod of Albany.	{	Columbia,	10	15
		Albany,	9	15
		Oneida,	7	13
		Geneva,	14	12
		Middle association	17	no Report.

	Presbyteries 4.	Min.	Con.
II. Synod of New-York and New-Jersey.	Long Island,	16	17
	Hudson,	16	21
	New-York,	29	27
	New-Brunswick,	22	32
III. Synod of Philadelphia.	Presbyteries 6.		
	Philadelphia,	18	28
	New-Castle,	20	34
	Carlisle,	21	32
	Lewes,	4	19
	Baltimore,	10	9
IV. Synod of Pittsburg.	Huntingdon,	14	36
	Presbyteries 5.		
	Redstone,	16	38
	Ohio,	22	37
	Erie,	12	33
V. Synod of Virginia.	Hartford,	9	29
	Lancaster,	5	24
	Presbyteries 4.		
	Hanover,	9	18
VI. Synod of Kentucky.	Abingdon,		no Report.
	Lexington,	13	24
	Winchester,	7	21
	Presbyteries 3.		
VII. Synod of the Carolinas.	Transylvania,	20	24
	West Lexington,	9	19
	Washington,	12	35
	Presbyteries 6.		
	Orange,	15	36
	1st Pres. S. Carolina,	16	31
	2d Pres. S. Carolina,	9	23
	Concord,	14	29
	Unino,	11	16
	Hopweell,		no Report.



From the Adviser.

VERMONT MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

IT is conceived expedient that the following Constitution should be laid before our readers in such season, that they may have opportunity to become ac-

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quainted with its principles, and decide respecting joining the Missionary Society before the annual meeting in September. A few remarks concerning the origin of the Society will not, it is presumed, be unacceptable.

"The Consociation of the Western Districts of Vermont," consisting of an annual delegation from a considerable portion

P p

of the churches on the west side of the mountain, had for many years directed their attention to the Missionary interest. Their business was conducted by a small committee; and, after the division of the Consociation, by a joint committee. Their resources were the occasional donations of individuals and the voluntary contributions of churches and societies. In 1807 a Missionary Society was contemplated, to consist of the two Consociations, but many inconveniences presented themselves, and it is happy, that the plan failed. As the religious interests of the State in some measure concentrated in the general convention, it was deemed highly desirable that this body should constitute the Missionary Society. The subject was proposed to the Convention, at their meeting in Middlebury, September 2d, 1807. Without a prospect of being able to supply but a very small proportion of the vacancies in the State, and with a desire to co-operate with other Societies *rather than give their efforts a different direction*, the Convention unanimously resolved themselves into a MISSIONARY SOCIETY; and, for want of time to mature a constitution, appointed twelve Trustees to conduct the business discretionally the first year, and to report the draft of a constitution to the next annual meeting. The draft of a constitution was accordingly submitted to the Society for adoption at their annual meeting in Windsor, Sept. 6, 1808. With a hope of more extensive usefulness, the Society at this meeting resolved so far to depart from their original

plan, as to open a door for admitting to membership all the friends of evangelical truth, who were disposed to add a small contribution to their funds. The proposed Constitution was therefore amended and finally adopted as follows.

EDITORS.

Constitution of the Vermont Missionary Society.

ART. I. The General Convention of Congregational and Presbyterian Ministers in the State of Vermont, together with such persons as may associate with them agreeably to the conditions, hereafter prescribed, shall constitute a Society by the name and style of the VERMONT MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

II. The object and design of this Society shall be the promotion of the Christian religion, by disseminating evangelical truth in destitute settlements.

III. The Society, at an annual meeting, may admit any person to membership on condition of his forwarding his name to the Secretary, advancing two dollars, and becoming responsible to pay one dollar, at the commencement of each succeeding year: or they may admit any person to membership for life on his advancing at entrance ten dollars.

IV. There shall be annually elected twelve Trustees, (six of whom shall be clergymen and six laymen,) whose duty it shall be to appoint and direct Missionaries; elect a Treasurer, Secretary and Auditor in case of vacancy, or a Secretary pro tempore in case of absence; and take all measures necessary to

effect the purposes of the Society. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to make to the Society, at each annual meeting, a summary report of their proceedings during the past year; and also, when required, to exhibit for inspection their book of records.

V. The time and place for the first meeting of the Trustees shall be annually appointed by the Society. Three persons shall always be necessary to constitute a quorum of the Trustees, but a less number may adjourn from time to time till a quorum is assembled.

VI. The Trustees are authorized to appoint a Committee of Missions, and such other Committees as they may deem necessary, the more conveniently to effect the objects, for which the Society was instituted.

VII. The Society shall annually elect a Secretary, whose duty it shall be to keep a fair record of their proceedings, who shall also be Secretary of the board of Trustees and draw orders on the Treasurer according to their direction.

VIII. The Society shall annually appoint some layman, Treasurer, who shall give bonds, if required, to the satisfaction of the Trustees for the faithful execution of his office. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to answer all orders drawn by the Secretary and countersigned by one of the Trustees, and annually exhibit to the Society regularly audited an account of receipts and expenditures.

IX. The Society shall also annually appoint an Auditor of the Treasurer's accounts; and one or more persons in each county

to solicit and receive donations, and transmit them to the Treasurer.

X. The officers of the Society shall enter on the duties of their respective offices, on the day appointed for the first meeting (to be considered the annual meeting) of the Trustees.

XI. The Society shall have power to appoint such additional officers and make such by-laws as are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

XII. An annual meeting of the Society shall be holden, at the same place, in which the General Convention meet, on the Thursday following the first Tuesday in September, at nine o'clock in the morning.

XIII. No alteration shall be made in this constitution unless the amendment shall have been proposed in writing, at an annual meeting, and adopted, at a subsequent annual meeting, by two thirds of the members present.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

Rev. G. C. Lyman, Moderator.
Rev. Thomas A. Merrill, Sec'y.
Seth Storrs, Esq. Treasurer.
Samuel Mattocks, Esq. Auditor.

TRUSTEES.

Rev. M. Tullar, Chairman.
Rev. Asa Burton, D. D.
Rev. Gershom C. Lyman.
Rev. Lemuel Haynes.
Rev. Jedidiah Bushnell.
Rev. Thomas A. Merrill, Sec.
Hon. Moses Robinson.
Hon. Elisha Ellis.
Seth Storrs, Esq.
Samuel Miller, Esq.

Charles Marsh, Esq.
Deac. Nathan Cooledge.

COMMITTEE OF MISSIONS.

Rev. Asa Burton, D. D.
Rev. Martin Tullar.
Rev. Jedidiah Bushnell.
Rev. Thomas A. Merrill.
Samuel Miller, Esq.

Dialogue between two Young Men, one of whom had reformed from a Vicious Life.

B. GOOD morning, sir, I have not for some time, seen you at our old place of rendezvous and hear that you have become a very pious man. Can you tell me how piety feels, and what is to be gained by it?

A. I wish to obtain piety, but without a reformation greater than the present, I cannot claim the title of a pious man.

B. And what is it frightens you.

A. I am not frightened. The sins we have committed together were great, and it is strange we were not afraid at the time of committing them. At present I feel no consternation. It is pity rather than fear which I feel.

B. What! do you pity yourself so soon?

A. No it is you, my old friend, whom I pity. The manner in which you address me excites my compassion.

B. But if you are not frightened whence comes this change in your appearance? And in your language? for there are some words *****

A. I must confess I was pro-

fane in my speech, as I find you now are.

B. But if this be not the effects of a fright, do tell me from whence it comes? Are there any new truths come into the world?

A. I have neither heard nor do I expect to hear of any. Old truths, which I once despised have excited my attention. I have been enabled to hear the voice of reason and conscience, and these led me to examine the word of God, by which means I have new views on many important subjects.

B. You say you was enabled; but were you not always a rational creature? Had you not a conscience? did you not possess the scriptures?

A. True, I had the powers of reason, and conscience, and a kind of belief in the scriptures, still I disregarded them. You know that we have both lived in disobedience to the word of God. I have seen you when both of us trembled under a sense of our guilt. If you cannot recollect I will point you to the time.— And how should you and I have felt, after we escaped the officer who brings criminals to justice, if we had been instantly summoned before the bar of God?

B. Indeed, that is a point to which I have not attended. You said you were enabled. Whence did this come if you always had the powers of reason and conscience?

A. Should I tell you it was by the assistance of the Spirit of God, would you not deny and endeavor to ridicule me?

B. I might deny, but I would not ridicule, for I see you speak sincerely.

A. It was by the Spirit of God, that I was not only enabled, but powerfully constrained to think of the truth and my own miserable state. The instructions of reason and conscience were sufficient to condemn me; yet these I did not regard. My heart so effectually opposed the truth, that I was ready to say it is without evidence. So will every obdurate sinner say, until, in the day of God's power, he is made to tremble, and forced to hear the truth.

B. Have you seen such a day?

A. I humbly hope that I have.

B. How did you obtain that power from God?

A. It was the sovereign grace of God, which moved him by his own power to open my eyes, and teach me my sin, guilt and danger.

B. And what moved him to be so kind to you, as it is evident you think he was?

A. Ah! you have come to a deep subject: what moved him? Here angels and men ought to cease their enquiries. He is a sovereign God. Secret things belong unto the Lord. In some few instances, he hath revealed the motives by which his counsels were determined; but generally he is silent on this subject. The frail and sinful minds of creatures could not comprehend if an attempt was made to reveal them. None can comprehend the resources of an infinite nature, or the events which can and may take place through an eternity to come. Until these are understood, it is impossible to answer the question, What moved him? You and I are but atoms in the universe which he

upholds: How he may use us in the ages to come, for his own glory, must remain secret until it is disclosed by the event.—

Why he gave his Son to die, that some of the guilty children of men might become sons of glory, and why the angels, which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the last day: Why some men believe, and others are left in impenitence, are questions which you must propose at the throne of God for information. But be not too inquisitive; approach not that throne presumptuously. Remember what he hath said, "Be still, and know that I am God." Therefore ask me not, What moved him?

B. I did not mean to be presumptuous. But you said, he was pleased to shew you your own sin and guilt. What sin and guilt have you, with which you was not always acquainted?

A. I always supposed myself a sinner, at the same time I understood nothing of the nature or guilt of sin. An injury to my own interest and peace I always dreaded; but of the wickedness of dishonoring God, I never, until of late, had any conception, and now I see that in this the exceeding sinfulness of sin consists. You asked what those sins are with which I was not formerly acquainted? I did neither think of God nor love him; I was opposed to his holy nature, law, providence and government: When urged by the dispensations of his providence, it pained me to think of his presence and I was unwilling he should be my judge: In the

duties of religion I had no satisfaction, neither had I any love or justice to men, except where I expected to receive benefit from their connexion. I looked to the creatures rather than to the Creator for my happiness. These things I have seen in myself, and they were my sin and unhappiness.

B. You spoke also of your guilt and danger, what now do you see concerning these?

A. I see that I have ever been vile and guilty for not loving, obeying and desiring to honor God. For this reason all my thoughts and actions have been wrong. I have been very guilty, while I thought nothing of my sin. I did not act from the motives by which I ought to have been influenced; neither had I the pure, holy and humble temper inculcated by the precepts and example of Christ. A state of guilt, is "that in which men are justly chargeable with crimes." And was I not criminal in thus treating a God of infinite excellency and my daily preserver? Whether, at the time, I did, or did not see, it alters not the case: Allow that I did not see; it was my own sin which prevented.

B. But you speak of danger also: Can you think there is much danger under the government of a God who is almighty and infinitely good?

A. Have you not felt yourself at sometimes in danger, and did you not tremble?

B. I have.

A. And was it not under the same government?

B. That I shall not deny.

A. How could this be?

B. Oh! we are now in this

world, but I meant danger for the world to come.

A. Will not that be just in another world which is just in this?

B. It may be, but I have always conceived there was more mercy for men on the other than on this side of the grave.

A. Likely, but I suspect this to be a delusion of ignorance and impenitence. You ask what is the danger of sin? It is connected with pain by the unchangeable laws of nature, both in this and the world to come. Did you ever commit a sin without some disagreeable consequences ensuing, either immediately or afterwards? Did you ever sin wilfully without some succeeding pains of conscience?

B. I cannot say that I ever did.

A. These evils are the danger of sin which I have felt. And can you assign a reason why it may not be so in another life?

B. I cannot.

A. I have now mentioned the natural consequences of sin: But in another state, for his own glory and the display of his justice, God may awfully add to them, by means we cannot now conceive, so that all his threatenings will be fulfilled. These views of the subject have led me to attempt a reformation of life.

B. You discourse rationally, although I cannot yet see as you do. The time calls us to our respective employments, we will converse again on these subjects.

FOR THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

History of a Religious Tract.

CROSSING a ferry in the state of Connecticut, some time the last year, a circumstance occurred which placed in so striking a light, to my mind, at least, the "utility of dispersing religious tracts among the poor," that I could not but consider this method of making public what I then witnessed and experienced, a duty by no means to be dispensed with.

In shoving off from the shore, I perceived our ferryman, (a negro,) to be out of temper on account of some fishing or fowling boats which had occupied the common landing-place in such a manner, as to compel us to pass farther round than usual, or inconveniently crowd between them and the wharf. Our stomachful Charon preferred the latter; and in accomplishing his object, evidently strove to revenge himself by an effort to upset one of their boats. While pressing the oar with great violence upon it, I observed a gun lying in a direction so exactly pointed at me, and so disturbed by contact with the oar, tangled seines, ropes, &c. as seemingly to threaten an immediate discharge of its contents into my brain! Instantaneously to drop into the bottom of our own boat, was my only *human* refuge, until we were completely disengaged from that of the "enemy."

The next outward act was to vent my disapprobation of the ferryman's conduct, in warm and impressive language, such as

notwithstanding my hastiness, I thought on the whole best calculated to deter him from similar imprudence in future.

He replied, with a tremendous oath, that those boats had no business in the landing place, and he would *sink* them when he went back. "You can do what you please, when you go back," (I rejoined with unabated spirit) "but you have no right to run such risques with *passengers*. I never, in all my life before, considered myself in such instant danger. It is owing to the special kindness of Divine Providence alone, that I am preserved."

But I did not exhaust my resentment upon our sable pilot. Something in my *own* conduct had recently called for disapproving reflection. When stepping into the boat, I had, Jonah-like, vainly attempted to "flee from the presence of the Lord," by shunning an opportunity of speaking to an old acquaintance, because I could not conscientiously do it, without making some remarks of a religious nature; and because I was too proud or too indolent, for such business, just then; either disliking the effort, or dreading the imputation of folly, enthusiasm, methodism, or some other despised motive.—O the "naughtiness," the *astonishing* "naughtiness," of the human heart!—But, forever blessed be the Almighty Former and Redeemer of it, that in *this* instance, *mine* was so soon and so mercifully corrected.

This was also, to me, a new occasion for noticing that powerful, over-ruling hand which came from incidents apparently trivial

and common, extract important, happy, and most unlook'd-for consequences.—A delay of a few minutes which the performance of my duty would have required, would in all human probability, have removed the obstructions in our passage, and permitted me to cross with my accustomed tranquillity : but then, the interesting adventure which succeeded, and the good resulting from it, would not have taken place. With the rapidity of lightning did these reflections now dart through my mind. And there was no time to be lost. The remainder of the passage was to be improved in turning to the best account, both the incident itself, and my own warmth of temper after it. An assortment of Tracts was in my travelling bag. “Can you read?” (said I, after a short silence, to the haughty African,) “Do you know how to read?” “I *hope* so,” (replied he, rather sullenly,) “I *hope* so too, but it is not *every* one who can. It is a great privilege to be able to read the *Bible*, and learn our *duty* from it.”—“I can read and write, and *cypher* too,” added he, with an air of importance which seemed to give increasing force to each fast-repeated stroke of the oar, as we glided speedily along. “Then you had better justice done you, when young than many of your color, and you ought to be grateful to God for it. Here is a book for you,” (handing No. 10, of the Connecticut Tracts—containing the story of “Naimbana the Black Prince”—“subjects for consideration,” &c. He thanked me, with no small embarrassment, and laid it upon the bench, while

attending to his usual occupation.

We were now arrived at the opposite shore. A stone from the ballast of our boat, placed by my own hand upon the corner of the Tract, secured this light vehicle of truth from being given to the winds and waves ;—and, after breathing, as I trust, a sincere and fervent prayer for the divine blessing on its contents,—the occasion,—and all who were, or *might* be concerned in it,—I jumped upon the wharf, joyful indeed, at another instance of common preservation ; yet humbled, awed, by this new display of mingled mercy and judgment,—of evil and of good,—in a course of events which it was impossible for me either to foresee or to control.

But for these events, I should perhaps, at this time, have crossed the river as I had often before done, in disdainful silence ; esteeming the occasion an unpromising one for any pious exertion, and endeavoring to quiet my conscience, by resolving such pride or sluggishness in my Redeemer's service, into a pretended regard for his divine precept,—“Cast not your pearls before swine.”

A *Christian* could not after this be supposed, for a moment during the remainder of the journey, wanting in humility, in trembling watchfulness for providences, and prayerful anxiety in *improving* them. Even for several succeeding months, did the recollection of what had so indelibly impressed my mind, at the time of its occurrence, occasionally call forth the most earnest petitions to Almighty

God, for his further blessing upon it, and the most grateful acknowledgments of his goodness in that universal, superintending providence, which permitteth not so much as a "sparrow to fall on the ground without our Heavenly Father."

To return to my narrative.—Being again, after the lapse of another year, called to repass the same ferry. I was struck with the altered countenance and deportment of the man who attended it. Softened, humbled, respectful; he had every appearance of one who was truly penitent for past misconduct, and determined on present and future reformation.

When we were all safely embarked, and I had feasted my eyes upon the beauty of the season, as exhibited upon the surrounding shore, I enquired how he liked the little book, "*Extro'nary* well," was his reply. "Folks thinks *extro'nary* good. Gone *all round*, here. Just got home again."

"Are there no such books here? They are so plenty in a neighboring town, it appears to me strange indeed, that you have had none of them."

He assured me this was the only one they had ever seen at the ferry. (And yet there had been nearly an hundred thousand, of different kinds, printed within a year or two, not many miles distant, and to be sold for 2 1-2 cents a piece!)

I then made a few remarks expressive of admiration at the excellent character of "*Naimbana*,"—and of regret at his premature death; dwelt on the probable good which would have resulted to his countrymen from

his example and instruction, had his life been spared; and added such other observations as I judged best adapted to make a salutary and lasting impression upon my *hearer*. To all which he gave profound attention, made several very judicious and serious remarks, and seemed filled with gratitude for the kindness I had done him.

We were quickly on shore again, and a happier voyage I never performed: Strange—and "*passing strange*" as it may appear to those who "regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands;"—who are *therefore* never thus unexpectedly "built up" by him with pure and lasting enjoyment upon apparently trivial, nay, almost contemptible foundations. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and *forget not* all his benefits."

Who would not *tray*? Who would not, in *faith* "cast" various "bread upon the waters," when *such* are its blessed returns?

REVIVALS of religion in BERKSHIRE, continued.

TO the benevolent mind, filled with painful sensations by reflecting upon the multitudes in the world who are perishing for lack of vision, it will be very consoling to review the numerous promises of the holy scriptures, which give assurance, that the dark places of the earth shall be glad for those who publish good tidings, and that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. As a partial accomplishment of such gra-

cious promises, may we not consider, not only the introduction of the Christian religion into these American ends of the earth, and the establishment of evangelical institutions in their numerous populous cities; but more minutely, the rise of so many fair and flourishing towns, the formation of so many Christian churches, which walk in the faith and order of the gospel, and experience so frequently the blessed effusions of the Holy Spirit, in that long neglected and inhospitable tract in *New England*, commonly called THE GREEN WOODS. As an example of these, if not of the first consideration, the following narrative of the religious state of WINDSOR*, conveyed to the editor from the Rev. GORDON DORANCE, the pastor, will be acceptable to our pious readers.

"It does not appear, either from the records of the church, or private information, that there has ever been a season of general attention to religion among the people since the first settlement of the town, yet there have been two seasons of more than usual attention to the best things. One before, and one since my settlement. In the years 1784 and 5, (I am informed) appearances were very promising in a religious view, and not far from 20 were added to the church, about that time; some of whom are still with us, and hopefully enjoy the comforts of religion. The effects of that awakening have been lasting. In the winter of 1808, when God so remarkably ap-

peared for Zion in some towns in this vicinity, we were not wholly passed by, as we trust. For a time there was a pretty general solemnity on the minds of people, numbers were under deep impressions, and not far from twenty obtained a hope that they experienced religion. More than a dozen of these converts have since united with the church, and nothing in particular appears to their disadvantage. Since that time, there have been a few hopeful conversions, and several who have been exercised with great doubts about their state, have lately enjoyed more comfortable views concerning their religion.

"Since my knowledge of this place, (which is now fifteen years) God has seemed to appear for individuals. A few almost every year have obtained a hope of their good estate, and excepting one, some have been added to the church: but apparently many have been called, when but few have been chosen. Many have walked, and are still walking, the broad road to destruction. I designed to be general and shall not enlarge. I wish, sir, for your prayers, and that as a people, we may be thought of in your more solemn moments.

"I am,

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"—."

FROM THE GEORGIA ANALYTICAL REPOSITORY.

REV. SIR,

LITTLE did I once think of ever addressing you with respect in your public character.

* This town was first called Gageborough.

I was as much confirmed in deistical sentiments as perhaps any man in the world, and believed that all the prophets were liars, Jesus of Nazareth an impostor, his apostles, ministers, and followers either fools or knaves, and the bible a book of absurd falsehoods. Yes, in the face of all evidence, and against reason this was my creed.

My parents gave me a moderate education, and at a time of life when the mind is most likely to receive and retain impressions, I entered into the American army, where I imbibed very pernicious principles, and advanced from bad to worse by almost imperceptible degrees, till I met with Paine's *Age of Reason*.—This book being exactly suited to my taste, speaking the language of my heart, and satisfying all my desires, I mounted at once upon its authority, superior to every restraint and distinguished myself as one of the most open, daring and blasphemous infidels of the age. I prevented my wife, who was piously inclined, and every other person over whom I had sufficient influence from, entering any place of religious worship.—All professors, and especially ministers of the Christian religion, I loaded in the most public manner with horrid imprecations. You sir, whom I now address with pleasure as my inestimable friend, shared in these causeless reproaches. I went several times out of curiosity to hear you preach, and read some of your late publications, but considered you an artful hypocrite, threatened to confute you before the faces of your friends, and seriously meditated a sys-

tem of opposition to your measures.

Under these circumstances, an old acquaintance of mine who had become, and continues, a warm friend of yours, requested me to go with him to one of your lectures. I refused, but he insisted upon my going, and was pleas'd to say in the course of our conversation, "I know I am not able to argue with you, but will you permit me to ask you one or two questions and return me candid answers?" I replied, by all means. He then said, "Are you sure that all Christians are wrong, and that you are right?" I paus'd, and struck with the mystery and immensity of the works of creation, I was constrained to say, no. "Well," he continued, "have you ever earnestly prayed to that God in whom you profess to believe, to shew you whether you are right or wrong in your opposition to Jesus Christ?"—Knowing that I never had, I again returned an answer in the negative. He then advised me to pray to God to satisfy me on this important question, and the reasonableness of his advice was so evident, that as we were alone, I fell immediately on my knees, and prayed for light in the controversy I had with Christians. I then went to your lecture, listened attentively, and felt some desire to hear without prejudice. After this I determined to examine the points to the best of my abilities, with constant prayer to God to strengthen my powers, and direct to the proper issue.

At this stage of the investigation, my business call'd me some distance from the city and all

public ordinances of religion. A little attention to Christianity soon convinced me, as it did Rousseau, that the arguments in its favor are unanswerable. As I saw plainly this religion could not be proved false, the unavoidable conclusion, it may therefore be true, rushed on my mind with resistless force. Beset with passions, prejudices, and difficulties, I began to find I was a weak sinful creature, and with some enlargement and fervor I continued to pray for light in divine and eternal things. My distress became and remained so great for several weeks, that I slept very little,—lost all relish for society, and what food I took was more from principle than inclination. Yet my health was not much impaired, and I performed my usual business. My views of sin, and consequently of my own state and character were materially altered, and every thing I read and heard, even the conversation of my wife and infant son seemed to reprove me. In short, I was made to see that divine justice was armed against me, and to feel my need of a Mediator and Saviour. It now became my ardent desire that the scriptures might prove true, for I saw no way but the one which they unfold, in which I could approach an infinitely just and holy God. My mind was still involved in the most awful darkness, and under the pain of dreadful uncertainty what would be the issue of this distress.

But when ready to sink in despair, with unexpected and surprising mercy, the God of all grace was pleas'd to visit my soul. At a late hour of the

night engaged in meditation and prayer I was enabled to look on a crucified Saviour, with such emotions as rendered it difficult for me to determine whether my eyes or my faith gazed on the glorious object before me. I beheld him whom I had pierced, and while I mourned, cried out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." I acknowledged and adored, and now most cordially acknowledge and adore Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial character, as my complete and only Saviour. How long I was wrapped in this ecstasy, or so profoundly exercised on these sacred mysteries, I am unable accurately to determine, probably, at least, one hour.

Thus a gracious God was pleas'd to convince me a most blind, daring sinner, of the truth of the scriptures and of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, as the only and Almighty Saviour of lost sinners, I now as firmly believe as in my own existence, and I trust my aim is now to glorify him, in associating with his people, and walking in his ordinances. His service is perfect freedom, and I stand in astonishment at my late blindness and delirium, as well as at the almost singular display of grace by which I have found peace with God, and such joy as an infidel will never believe is experienced in the present state. I have had some hard conflicts with a tempter whose existence I lately denied, and begin to be acquainted with his devices.

My old deistical companions, most of whom I looked down upon as pigmies in deism, will probably think me deranged, be-

cause I have embraced the Christian religion, but if they will act with candor and sincerity in search of truth, they too will become Christians. I have often been told, and am now persuaded, that it is not for want of evidence that men reject Christ. There is sufficient proof, were it attended to with an honest heart, that he is the Son of God.

I would just remark that no Christian, who was not precisely in my state, can reasonably think it strange that he was not dealt with, as God has been pleas'd to deal with me. Among those as far advanced in infidelity as I was, if any such monsters exist, it will be a miracle of mercy if one of them, should in any way, or by any means escape damnation.

For the injustice I have done you, my dear sir, I know you would not permit me to ask your pardon, since God, I hope, has forgiven me my numerous and enormous sins. Your zeal and activity in doing good, which once excited my resentment, and provoked my opposition, while they command my cordial approbation, engage me constantly and fervently to pray that God would abundantly strengthen you in his most glorious cause.

PHILOMATH.

Memento to the middle aged, taken from the loose papers of one, who, at forty-five, was suddenly removed by death, from the busy prospects of life.

A STRANGE thought has followed me this afternoon. In passing through the streets

of the town, engaged in business, on every meeting with an old acquaintance, this thought occurred, "Am I elder or more young than this man?" For the afternoon, I reflected on the enquiry as one of curiosity. In conversation with my wife, in the evening, the circumstance was related to her. She instantly replied, "Are you insensible, we draw near in age to those who are called old people?" It was the first time, through my whole life, that the thought ever occurred, of course it was repulsed.—But in our subsequent discourse, reviewing several streets, with which we were both acquainted, and counting up the catalogue of our youthful companions, I became astonished at the number who sleep in the grave! Still I am left. I was more astonished in counting up the ages in my own family, and finding myself the parent of several, who are not unknown in the young and polite circle.—The next day, resuming my business with many people, the same thought returned, "Art thou elder or more young than this man?" with an addition to the enquiry, "Art thou ready to meet death, by which so many of thy youthful companions have been removed?" An incessant return of these questions has almost disqualified me for business; for, indeed, I have never thought of death until now. It surprises me that I have been so inconsiderate.—Where were my reflections, when bearing on my own shoulders to the grave, the play-mates of my childhood, and two of my early companions in business.—If a sense of death and its con-

sequences, must be so early crowded upon me, I must bid adieu to several schemes of gain, on which I have long meditated, and was now preparing to execute : I must join my testimony to a description of human life, which was always disagreeable to me, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."—Thus far the fragment.

REMARKS.

ON no subject are men more generally deceived than their own progress in life. Those already departed can no longer bear a testimony for its brevity. A love of life entices men to think, to-morrow will be as this day, I shall live to pursue my interest and gain.

The child, with eager haste, passes into the scenes of youth, rejoicing in the flight of time, that he may act in a more important state : The youth, enchanted with the prospects of the world, hurries forward to the more interesting employments, interests and honors of mid-life : If not prevented by a premature death, the bustle of activity speedily takes hold of the heel of old age. But surely, it is said, these pains cannot be the warning of age in its advance ! No ! They are a cold, a sprain, a rheumatism, or something accidental. Thus the man goes on, cleaving to life, thinking he is young, death at a distance, and another world far off, until the palsied limb obliges him to bid farewell to the world.

In this progress of insensibility, the greatest part of mankind are found. A love of life, and a dread of death is common to all men. Of the poor, it may be

said, by way of excuse, they are impelled by certain circumstances to constant worldly care ; of the ignorant, they know no better : But what shall be said of the rich and intelligent ; of the reverend Prelate, and learned Judge, who are still officious to grasp greater honors and more lucrative employments ? All we can say, is, they are insensible of their approach to death.—This is so common an evil among men, that no one hath a right to receive these remarks as a reflection on himself.

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At a Meeting of the Directing Committee of the Connecticut Bible Society, July 3, 1809,

Voted, That a committee of Accounts, to consist of three persons, and an Auditor be chosen to continue in office, until the first meeting of the Directing Committee, after the next annual meeting of the Society.

Voted, That all accounts against the Society shall be liquidated by the Committee of Accounts, who shall draw orders on the Treasurer for the payment of the same, which orders shall be registered by the Auditor, and endorsed as being so registered, before they shall be paid by the Treasurer. And all liquidated accounts, on which orders on the Treasurer are drawn, shall be kept on file in the office of the Auditor.

Voted, That on the annual audit of the Treasurer's accounts, the orders which shall have been drawn on him by the Committee of Accounts, endorsed by the Auditor as duly registered, and paid by the Treasurer,

shall be lodged with the Auditor, together with duplicates of the receipts given by the Treasurer for all monies paid to him.

Ichabod L. Skinner, Esq. the Rev. Abel Flint, and Mr. Henry Hudson were chosen Committee of Accounts.

Mr. Henry Hudson was chosen Auditor.

Voted, That of the money accruing to the Society from the subscriptions of members for life, thirty dollars, for each member, be appropriated to the

establishment of a permanent fund; the interest of which to be applied to the uses of the Society.

Voted, That Ichabod L. Skinner, Esq. and Samuel Pitkin, Esq. together with the Treasurer of the Society be a Committee to superintend the permanent fund, for the year ensuing, to loan it on such principles, on such securities, and for such terms of time, as they shall judge best.

A true copy, certified by
ABEL FLINT, Clerk.

POETRY.

.....

Ode on Hell.

GULPH of Despair ! Abyss of wo profound !
Vast prison-house of crime polluted breath,
Whose rugged caverns with redoubled sound,
Return the peace-destroying shrieks of death ;
Ope to the world thy never dying fires,
And check the lawless lusts and hot desires,
The earnest of a seat in thine abode,
Of wrath unmixed, and the curse of God.

Liquid fires, the sons of night,
In one common ruin whelm,
In malignant sombrous light,
Reign the horrors of thy realm.

Receptacle of Fiends ! whose hollow walls,
Re-echo far the notes of deep despair,
Whose ghostly scenes the stoutest heart appals,
Groaning unpitied on th' empoison'd air.
Sweltering in death, nought still their souls engage,
But the full licence of a glutless rage :
Yet to thy murky vaults this rage confin'd,
Each foe to each, in misery only join'd.

Gorgon terrors on thee wait,
See the screaming spectres rear,
Frantic, hissing, fir'd with hate,
Gleaming with the torches glare.

Infernal discord's Empire ! hideous seat,
Of endless jarring, and confusion dire,
Restless suspicion, perfidy, deceit,
Corroding envy, and vindictive ire.
No soft emotion glancing on the breast,
Without distraction, and within distress'd,
Nor from the desolation stretching wide,
One friend to pity, or one rock to hide.

Mingled shouts and groans arise,
With affright convuls'd the train,
Haggard cheeks and blood-shot eyes,
Swell the horrors of the scene.

Ocean of Passion ! whose sulphureous flood,
Swells all thy mariners with quenchless thirst,
Remorse still adding fever to the blood,
And lust insatiate, craving food for lust.
Devouring monster ! gnashing on thy prey,
With fangs more cruel at thy grim survey,
Of spirits scap'd thy jaws, securely free,
From thy dominion, monster, and from thee.

See the maddened eye-balls roll,
Envious at the heavenly throng,
Bite his chains each vengeful soul,
Darting forked fire each tongue.

Realm of eternal Night ! scarce unappali'd,
Tho' hid in Christ, that throng on thee look down,
When memory faithful, shall have once recall'd,
The love once spurn'd, the grace and proffered crown.
When sense and reason join to point the dart,
And conscience hurls it to thine inmost heart,
The hope of future hope, shall yield its breath,
And life exhaustless measure out the death.

Fancy bold attempts no more
Images of thy despair,
Only faithless souls explore,
Only know its depth or dare.



Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

1809.

July 3.	Rev. David Harrower, collected in new settle- ments,.....	\$ 8 44
10.	A Female Friend of Missions, Derby.....	0 50
		\$ 8 94